

## For Internal Use Only

GRANT RESULTS REPORT/ LESSONS

May 2000

### *Substance Abuse*

**National Basketball Association Program to Educate Youth**

**About the Health Risks of Tobacco Use**

ID# 030531

\$164,000 (1 year from 12/01/96 to 11/30/97)

**"Smoking is an Offensive Foul" NJ Nets Anti-Tobacco**

**Media and Education Program**

ID# 033175

\$191,500 (1 year from 01/01/98 to 12/31/98)

**New Jersey Nets (East Rutherford, NJ)**

**Gary Sussman**

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Two program contracts from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) helped the National Basketball Association's New Jersey Nets (Nets) to mount an educational and media campaign aimed at reducing smoking among youth. The Nets used stadium signage, public address announcements, radio and television Public Service Announcements, and printed materials to disseminate anti-tobacco messages to fans during their 1997 and 1998 seasons. In partnership with New Jersey Breathes, a statewide tobacco-free coalition and an RWJF *SmokeLess States*® national program grantee, the Nets extended their efforts into communities and schools throughout New Jersey and enlisted the support of young people through an incentive program that rewarded their tobacco-free awareness projects with free tickets to Nets home games. The team now serves as a model for other professional sports franchises interested in replicating its anti-tobacco campaign. In addition, As a result of the relationship built with the Nets through these grants, RWJF, through its Sports & Philanthropy project (Grant ID#s 037939 and 038221), was instrumental in helping the Nets establish the New Jersey Nets Foundation, which is focusing its efforts on at-risk youth in urban communities in New Jersey.

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### GRANTMAKING LESSONS

1. Consider funding more professional sports teams that show interest in the anti-tobacco message. In order to reach youth with a specific message, it is important to target these messages to them in a range of settings: home, school, recreational activities, and entertainment centers, including sports events. Links between celebrity status and certain healthy behavior messages can be very powerful means through which children are taught the dangers and consequences of certain risk-taking behaviors. (PO)